

ALDERMAN
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CHICAGO 15, ILLINOIS

FOR BETTER LIVING

*Landlord - Tenant
Rights
and
Responsibilities*



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Slums do not happen, they are made. Working for our neighborhood to be a good place to live in, a place we will be proud of, is everyone's job. If landlords and tenants are willing to meet each other at least half way, we will have good buildings and a good neighborhood.

The law places responsibilities on both landlord and tenant. Sometimes when trouble comes up it is necessary to call on the City to enforce the law. But it is far better to try to settle any trouble in a fair and reasonable way between tenant and landlord first, and to call for help from the City only if that fails.

In these pages, there are a few suggestions for landlords, tenants, and janitors about getting along with each other. There is also a summary of the Chicago Housing Code (effective January 1, 1957).



WHAT TO DO WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE

Tenants should tell the janitor or landlord first if any problems arise. Likewise, janitors and landlords should tell each other and tenants in case of a PROBLEM. On any important matter, it is usually a good idea to write a letter and keep a copy. Don't demand action within a few minutes or a few hours unless there is a real emergency. Be reasonable. If repeated requests fail, then you may want to call on the City for help. The community organization serving your area will be glad to advise you.

The janitor and landlord should also remember to tell the tenant when they need to do work which will affect the tenant--such as repairing a furnace breakdown or working on water pipes which requires shutting off the water for a long time. The tenant should be told about how long the repair work might take in these cases so that he can make arrangements for the inconveniences of no heat or no water.



DUTIES OF THE TENANT

The tenant should pay his rent when it is due or his rights are in danger.

He should read his lease carefully before signing it. He is responsible for what he signs. After it is signed, he should live up to the agreement. A fair lease protects both landlord and tenant by making their agreement clear.

The tenant should be careful not to cause damage. Adults as well as children should be careful not to mark up walls, break plaster or windows, allow water to overflow, etc.

Anything which needs to be repaired should be reported to the landlord or janitor right away. Waiting too long to report something can make the trouble harder and more expensive to fix.

The law says that tenants must keep their dwellings in a clean, sanitary and safe condition (78-18.1)*. This means that:

1. Garbage and waste paper must be put into the covered garbage cans the landlord provides; (78-18.1e)*.
2. Garbage should be drained and wrapped before being deposited in refuse containers; (99-16)**.
3. Roaches and mice should be gotten rid of by the tenant if his is the only apartment that has them (foods should be cleared away and garbage put into covered cans so that these pests are not attracted); (78-18.1d)*.
4. Doorways must not be blocked by furniture, etc., so that in case of fire people can get out quickly; (78-18.1c), (87-15.1)*.
5. Papers, rags, paints or other things which catch fire easily should not be kept lying around; (78-18.1g)*.



The law also says that tenants must not overcrowd an apartment. This means that the number of people allowed in an apartment depends on how many square feet of floor space there is, as shown in this table: (78-16.1)*.

If the number of square feet is	then the number of people must not be more than
less than 250	1
250 to 349	2
350 to 449	3
450 to 524	4
525 to 599	5
600 to 674	6
and so on, 75 square feet for each extra person	

For example, by multiplying the length and the width of a room we determine the number of square feet in it. A room that is 12 feet wide and 15 feet long contains 180 square feet.

The total floor space of an apartment is determined by multiplying the length and width of the entire floor space of the interior of an individual apartment. A 2-1/2 room apartment containing a living room with inner door bed, 12 feet x 15 feet; is 180 square feet; a kitchenette-dining area, 10 feet x 12 feet, is 120 square feet; a bathroom 6 feet x 6 feet, is 36 square feet. This example totals 336 square feet and should accommodate 2 people as illustrated by the chart.

No room may be used for sleeping unless it has at least 70 square feet of floor area. For the use of 2 persons, it must be at least 100 square feet, and for each additional person beyond two, 50 square feet. For occupants under 12 years old, the additional requirements are slightly less, 35 square feet. For example, in one sleeping room a couple and child under 12 years old, require at least 135 square feet. (78-16.2)*

Any room that is used as part of a dwelling (except a small kitchen) must have a window or mechanical ventilation.

Tenants are responsible for obeying these rules. The landlord may want to ask the tenant to agree in the lease to obey these rules. If he does not ask this and if the tenant breaks the rules, then the law says the landlord is responsible for allowing the tenant to break them. (78-18.3)* The landlord may also want to write an "occupancy rider" into the lease, requiring that nobody can live in the dwelling except the people named by the tenant in the lease. If a tenant does not live up to his lease or any "rider" he can be evicted.

DUTIES OF THE LANDLORD:

The landlord should live up to the terms of the lease he has made. He should make all necessary repairs as soon as possible and keep the building in safe condition.

The law puts a great many responsibilities on the landlord since he is the owner of the building and collects rents. It says that:

-- Each dwelling unit must have its own toilet, wash-basin, and bathtub or shower, (exception: two one-room or two two-room units may share one bathroom -- (78-13.1 and 78-13.4)*:

-- Each family unit must have its own kitchen sink -- (78-13.5)*;





-- There must be two exits from each floor. (At present it is allowed to have one of these two exits pass through an already existing "crash panel door" through another apartment. However, it is now illegal to build any "crash panel doors," and all existing ones will be illegal after December 31, 1961 -- 78-15.3)*:

-- If there is a central heating plant in the building, heat must be supplied from September 15 to June 1 (and the minimum temperatures should be 60° at 6:30 a.m.; 65° at 7:30 a.m.; and 68° from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. -- 78-13.7 and 78-13.8)*; (96-4)**

-- Hot water will have to be supplied in all buildings by December 31st, 1961, and must be supplied now if hot water equipment is in the building (78-13.10 and 78-13.11)*;

-- Screens must be provided for every window from April 15 to November 15 of each year except above the fourth floor. (78-17.4b)*;

-- Garbage cans with tight-fitting covers must be provided (99-16)**;

-- Exterminator service must be provided where insects and rodents are found in more than one apartment (78-18.2c)*;

-- Public areas of a building must be kept in a clean, sanitary and safe condition (this includes stairs, railings, carpeting, and lighting of hallways and back porches -- 78-18.2b)*;

-- Basement rooms cannot be used for dwellings unless their required window area is all above ground level, and unless they are waterproof (78-16.5)*;

-- Overcrowding of dwelling units is not to be allowed. The law holds the owner responsible in cases of overcrowding unless his lease agreement can show occupancy limitation. (This applies to monthly tenancy as well as yearly leases.) (78-16 and 78-18.3)*.

ROOMING HOUSES:

A rooming house, roughly speaking, is any dwelling where rooms are let to three or more unrelated persons for living and sleeping, but not for cooking or eating. Operators of rooming houses must obey all the law's rules about crowding of sleeping rooms, hot water, exits, heat, repairs and maintenance, etc. However, no more than ten people can use one bathroom. Tenants are also responsible for compliance with the above-mentioned duties imposed by law.

JANITORS:

Janitors are responsible for the ordinary care of the building, not for the housekeeping of the tenants. For example, heat in season and hot water are to be provided from about 6 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Heating equipment is to be properly cared for. Garbage is to be removed every day, except that on Sundays and holidays it is to be removed the afternoon of the day before. Garbage cans are to be kept clean.

Basement and halls are to be kept clean. Sidewalks and porches are to be kept clean and clear of snow. Janitors are not required to rebuild or reseed a lawn, but must reseed patches, sprinkle and cut the lawn. Screens and storm windows are to be put up and taken down in season (the landlord is to provide the necessary assistance for storm windows).

Minor repairs are to be made in case of emergency.

BUILDING PERMITS AND ZONING:

A permit must be obtained from the Building Department for any structural changes, repairs or remodeling done in a building. If the remodeling will be extensive, architectural plans may be required before a permit is granted. Zoning requirements must also be met in any extensive remodeling job.

Permits must be posted where they can be seen from the outside of the front of the building.

Any change in the use of a building must comply with the requirements of the zoning law. For instance, if you own a house in an area that is zoned for single family homes, you cannot convert it into apartments or a rooming house. In general, areas are zoned for single family homes, apartment buildings, business areas, manufacturing areas.

REGISTRATION OF MULTIPLE DWELLING UNITS:

Owners of buildings containing three or more family units or rooming accommodations must register information as provided by the Registration of Owner Ordinance with the building ordinance department. The ordinance further provides — the legal responsibility for a building can only be changed by the filing of a new statement.



WHERE TO ASK FOR HELP:

If problems arise that cannot be settled between the landlord and the tenant, it may be necessary to ask for outside help. We urge that you call your community organization if you believe there are any violations of the housing, electrical, plumbing or zoning codes. A community organization can get reports on the city's action as it progresses in the Building Department, which are not available to individuals.

Numbers to know:

1. Building Department - DE 7-5252 - for reporting complaints of violations of housing, building, electrical, plumbing and zoning violations; and for obtaining permits for major building repairs or remodeling.
 2. Fire Prevention Bureau - RA 6-8000
 3. Health Department - RA 6-8000
 4. Air Pollution Dept. - RA 6-8000 (smoke violations)
 5. Ward Superintendents - for reporting the need for street cleaning, garbage collections.
 6. Trees on City Property (Forestry Dept.) - RA 6-8000
 7. Dead Animal Removal - ST 2-5651
 8. Clogged Sewers and Catch Basins - MI 3-4642
 9. Street Lights Out - SU 7-0655
 10. Curb and Street Repairs - RA 6-8000, Ext. 749
 11. Abandoned Cars - your local Police Station
 12. Your alderman's office also receives complaints.
 13. Community organization.
- * Relates to the Section in the Housing Code where this may be found.
- ** Relates to the Section in the Health Code where this may be found.

Your community organization, as part of its program, works for the physical improvement of your community as well as the improvement of living standards.

For further information -- contact:

HYDE PARK-KENWOOD COMMUNITY CONFERENCE
1307 E. 53rd Street
Chicago 15, Illinois
Butterfield 8-8343